



Your Child Has a Unilateral Hearing Loss

If your audiologist has described your child's hearing loss as unilateral you may have many questions, such as:

What is unilateral (one-ear) hearing loss?

Your child has one ear with normal hearing and one ear with a hearing loss. The degree of hearing loss can vary from mild to profound. Your child may have difficulties locating where sounds come from and understanding speech in a noisy environment, such as in a day care setting, on a playground or at family gatherings. Children diagnosed with unilateral hearing loss are eligible for Early Intervention services in Massachusetts.

Will my child need hearing aids?

Talk to your audiologist about hearing aids. Some children with unilateral hearing loss use hearing aids to hear sounds or speech better; some do not. Some children benefit from other types of equipment to help them hear in group settings.

Does my child need intervention services now?

Children with unilateral hearing loss will develop more like a child with normal hearing if given the proper supports early. Some children will have delays in speech and language; others will not. Enrolling in services early can help prevent these delays. You will work with your Early Intervention provider to decide what services are right for your child and your family.

Unilateral hearing loss is now identified in children at a much younger age through newborn hearing screening. These children now can benefit fully from Early Intervention. Services are available for your child until the age of three, regardless of degree of hearing loss. Talk to your child's audiologist and doctor or call the Universal Newborn Hearing Screening Program at 800-882-1435 for more information. You can also e-mail Newborn.Hearing@state.ma.us.

You might want to consider these tips for your child with a unilateral hearing loss:

- Continue to have your child's hearing tested on a regular basis, as recommended by your audiologist. The audiologist will monitor your child's hearing to make sure that it does not change.
- Seek medical attention whenever you suspect your child has an ear

infection.

- Be sure to let people know it is important to have your child's attention when they talk with your child.
- Cut down or eliminate background noise, for example, television or radio, when speaking or reading to your child.
- When holding your child or walking with them, remember to have their 'better' ear facing you.
- Position your child's car seat so that their 'better' ear is facing the other people in the car.

There are many resources in this Parent Information Kit which we hope you find useful regarding your child's unilateral hearing loss. However, as this Kit is for all children with hearing loss, not all materials will be appropriate for your family. Websites that have specific information on unilateral hearing loss include:

<http://www.boystownhospital.org/hearing/info/unilateral.asp>

http://www.csdb.org/Early%20Education/par_unilateral_loss.html